Who is Stiglitz and why is everyone talking about him?

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If you start to read about measuring progress, or going 'beyond GDP', you will soon start to see the name Stiglitz or the Stiglitz Commission.

Joseph Stiglitz is a Nobel Prize winning economist, who headed, along with Professor Amartya Sen and Professor Jean-Paul Fitoussi, the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress. The commission was asked by the French President Nicholas Sarkozy in February 2008 to look into the limitations of GDP as an indicator of economic performance and social progress and to consider additional information required to produce a better picture of progress and wellbeing.

They delivered a 300-page report which gave impetus to already growing interest around the topic of progress. While many projects looked beyond GDP before this report came out, (for example the ABS has been publishing Measures of Australia's Progress since 2002), the report served as a major catalyst for further growth in the progress field.

Because of its comprehensive coverage of the issues and the technical credentials of the authors, it is almost compulsory reading for anyone working or interested in this field. It is a substantial report which can be intimidating. There is a shorter report, which some may find more accessible.

I won't go into details about the report here, but it is worth a look.

What do you think about the report?

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